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General Comments on Section 405 of H. R. 9910

Section 405 of H. R. 9910 (the "Foreign Assistance Act of 1971") as amended in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee would add a new Section 15 to the Act entitled "An Act to provide certain basic authority for the Department of State." Subsection (b) of the new section would require the Department of State to keep the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee "fully and currently" informed regarding all activities and responsibilities of all departments, agencies, and independent establishments of the United States Government conducted outside the United States or its territories or possessions. It also requires these departments, agencies, and establishments to furnish any information requested by either of these Committees relating to their overseas activities and responsibilities.

If it were to become law, this proposed section would raise a fundamental question of committee jurisdiction. The Armed Services Committees of the House and Senate are charged with legislative oversight of the military services and the Central Intelligence Agency. While these elements of the Executive Branch are, of course, responsive to requests from various other committees of the Congress for information pertinent

to matters within their jurisdiction, their specific operations and budgetary considerations are within the sole jurisdiction of the Armed Services and Appropriations Committees. I request, therefore, that the words "within the jurisdiction of these Committees" be inserted after the word "responsibilities" at line 7 and after the word "information" at line 11 on page 57 of the bill as reported by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I believe that the addition of these words does not dilute the thrust of the section as proposed by the Committee but leaves no doubt as to the specific oversight responsibilities of the various committees involved.